

Hamilton Field, Group Headquarters Type C
(Facility No. 644)
F Street, west side
Novato
Marin County
California

HABS No. CA-2398-CV

HABS
CAL
21-NOVA,
ICV-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAMILTON FIELD Group Headquarters Type C (Facility No. 644)

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Location: Hamilton Army Air Field
Novato, Marin County, California
Group Headquarters Type C
Facility No. 644 (F Street, west side)

U.S.G.S.: Novato, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1954 (revised 1980)
Petaluma Point, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1959 (revised 1980)
UTM Coordinates: Zone 10; A: 542100/4213620; B: 544720/4212220;
C: 542760/4210650; D: 541040/4212600

Significance:

Building 644 is considered significant for its association with Air Force history in northern California, and with World War II actions in the Pacific Theater. Facility No. 644 housed the administrative operations of the particular air group that occupied the barracks on what is currently known as WAF Hill. The barracks, mess hall and club, and this particular facility are included in a self-contained group of buildings located around the crest of a hill overlooking the main base area. In the 1950s this building group was occupied by the Women's Air Force (WAF).

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-239B) for a comprehensive Statement of Significance and individual report HABS No. CA-239B-A for a condensed Statement of Significance.

Description:

This small one-story rectangular frame office building has a low-pitched composition gable roof with louvers in the gable ends. Metal ventilators are located along the ridgeline. The siding is horizontal board covered with asphalt shingles. The primary entrance is accessed via a concrete stoop and stairway with two-inch by four-inch wood rails. Double entrance doors are solid-core wood with four lights and three recessed panels; lock sets are standard metal with exterior Von Duprien thumb latch locks, with interior round knobs (a few of black porcelain) and half-mortised hinges. Doors have metal panic bars on the interior. Fenestration consists of six-over six and eight-over eight-light double hung wood sash. The building is supported by concrete piers and a partial wood understory on the sloping end.

Original interior walls were covered with gypsum board; composition wood paneling has been installed over the original in some hallways. Subflooring for the headquarters is tongue and groove wood with eight-inch-square vinyl asphalt tile covering in red and green. Doors are solid-core wood with either three or five recessed panels. The heating system consists

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of a forced air gas heater; all ductwork is exposed. Original lighting fixtures are of the "schoolhouse" type, with a canopy and suspended milk glass bowl shade. Replacement lights are industrial type open end two-tube fluorescent fixtures mounted flush with the ceiling or suspended on rods and chains.

Latrines have ceramic tile floors, with one- by one inch, one- by two-inch, and two by two-inch tiles. Walls are clad in four- by four-inch ceramic tile. Sinks are enameled cast iron wall-mounted, made by Standard; each has a mirror. "Standard" wall-mounted urinals and Standard Sanitary Corp. Pacific toilets separated by wood stall partitions are located in each latrine. There is also a floor-mounted cast iron mop sinks in each latrine. Lighting fixtures are recessed chrome and glass.

The building was modernized in 1954 with the installation of asphalt tile base and flooring, tileboard wainscoting, and exterior asbestos shingle siding. A small rectangular extension, also with a gable roof, was added to the south side of this administrative building in 1950.

The building is located on a hill top. Concrete walkways surround it and adjacent buildings. Historic plantings consist of poplar, acacia, and Osage orange trees, as well as pyracantha shrubs. According to informants, the rose bushes on WAF Hill were planted by members of the Women's Air Force when they occupied the barracks.

Historical Context:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

This squadron headquarters was completed in August 1945, near the end of the war, for a cost of \$9,581.43. Some of the adjacent barracks were used to house medical personnel, and this building held offices for the administrative staff. It later served as administrative headquarters for the WAFs.

Sources:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

See the project Field Record, roll 10, exposures 4-6; roll 11, exposures 11-12; roll 12, exposures 1-3; and roll 72, exposures 7-8.

The line drawn sketches were drafted on site in 1994 by Keith Syda, scanned into a computer and drawn by Christopher MacDonald in 1995, and corrected and finalized by Claire Warsaw in 1996 (all PAR Environmental Services, Inc. staff).

Project Information:

Hamilton Army Air Field is owned by various federal entities including the Department of the Navy, Department of the Army, United States Coast Guard, and General Services Administration (GSA). The Army/GSA parcels are being excessed and sold to private developers. The Navy property is included in Base Closure and Realignment actions.

As part of the Army's undertaking, it has been determined in consultation with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) that the excess sale will have an affect on properties at the air field, and that these properties are components of a district that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Based on consultation with the OHP and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 CFR part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was entered into by the interested parties in March 1994. The agreement stipulated that prior to excess sale the Army must contact the HABS/HAER division at the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, San Francisco, California, to determine the appropriate level and kind of recordation for the subject properties. The MOA further stipulated that copies of the documentation be made available to the OHP and appropriate local archives designated by the OHP. This recordation has been prepared in order to meet those stipulations.

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Date prepared: July 1995

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